

Illegal mining in Karnataka

2799. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have been receiving repeated complaints about the illegal mining and exploitation of labour in the Bellary district of Karnataka; and

(b) if so, what action Government have initiated to deal with the kingpins of this racket who are robbing Government of crores of rupees in excise revenue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a) Some instances of illegal mining and exploitation of labour have come to the notice of the Government.

(b) State Governments are the owners of minerals and grant mining lease. Since the mineral rights and collection of revenue vests with the State Government, and police and law & order machinery is with the respective States, full powers to curb illegal mining have been delegated to the State Government as per the Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) Act, 1957. The State Government has set up a Commission on Enquiry, which will also assess the quantum of losses to the Government due to illegal mining. The Central Government has also directed State Governments to frame rules under section 23C of MMDR Act, constitute task forces at State/District level for preventing of illegal mining and furnish quarterly return on illegal mining for review by Ministry of Mines. During the year 2005-06, State Government of Karnataka has realized total fine Rs.191.4 lakhs and for 2006-07 (till June, 2006) Rs. 41 lakhs for royalty, cess, taxes and penalty.

Strategic alloys for defence organisations

†2800. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether strategic alloys which were being manufactured in Bharat Aluminium Company Limited before its disinvestments, are still being manufactured therefor defence organizations;

(b) if not, whether that chemical formula was withdrawn by Government;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.